

**WILKINSBURG BOROUGH**  
**Council Work Session**  
**November 19, 2014**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President McCarthy-Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Avenue, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Taiani, Ms. Moore, Ms. Grannemann, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, and President McCarthy-Johnson. Borough Manager Marla P. Marcinko, was also present. Mayor John Thompson and Ms. Trice were absent. A quorum was established.

Ms. Trice arrived at approximately 6:31 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Following the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence was observed to remember victims of violent crime.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None at this time.

**FINANCE**

**1. Monthly financial reports.**

Mr. Lefebvre turned the meeting over to Finance Director Dave Egler and the Borough Manager. Mr. Egler noted that the financial reports are through October 31, 2014, so the budget is more accurate, as the figures are more current. He reported that public utility revenue is up 8.4% and that current real estate tax collections are at budget. Ms. Macklin noted that the Police Department has been reimbursed for nearly \$61,000 in overtime expenses by the FBI. On the expense side, Mr. Egler reported that Department Heads are doing a good job of keeping expenses in line, and that discretionary spending has been suspended through the end of the year. Ms. Macklin asked about tax refunds that were higher than expected, and Mr. Egler responded that they have started to level off; Ms. Marcinko added that the Borough has no way to predict this when preparing budgets. Mr. Lefebvre asked about payments for Code supplements, and Ms. Marcinko responded that this charge is for the Codified Ordinances which are continuously updated online and in hard copy twice a year. President McCarthy-Johnson questioned data processing costs and wondered if these costs will decrease upon the hiring of an in-house person; Ms. Marcinko responded in the affirmative. President McCarthy-Johnson also asked about “contracted other services”. Mr. Egler responded that he did not know; Ms. Marcinko noted that it’s broken down in

the budget, but not the financial report. Mr. Egler consulted the budget and reported that this figure includes waters coolers, mats, fire extinguishers, outside dumpsters, and the like. Ms. Macklin asked about increased vehicle maintenance costs for DPW and was told that the higher costs are mostly attributable to street sweeper repairs. Mr. Taiani asked about the overage on traffic signals, and Mr. Egler responded that he didn't know, but that he would find out and report back to Mr. Taiani. Ms. Grannemann wondered why so little was spent on storm sewers, and if work was budgeted but not completed and Ms. Marcinko explained that that charges on invoices are not designated for storm sewers or sanitary sewers, and that sometimes work on sanitary sewers is booked to storm sewers. Ms. Macklin questioned the \$69,000 service credit, and Ms. Marcinko responded that this is a service credit for former Wilkinsburg firefighters who went to the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire when the Borough contracted with the city for fire services. At the time, Ms. Macklin requested that it be booked as a Series C Bond entry, which artificially inflated the budget by about \$150,000/year.

## **2. Discussion – Statistical analysis reports.**

Ms. Marcinko noted that Council requested statistical analysis reports some time ago, and that Mr. Egler sent some to Council last Friday. In addition, Ms. Marcinko perused past budgets, and pulled several reports as well as recommended reports from the Early Intervention Plan. Ms. Macklin mentioned the state consultant who came in October of 2013, and Ms. Marcinko noted that the state provided a peer consultant who focused more on practices, procedures, and job descriptions; there was no discussion about financial reports. Ms. Grannemann requested a balance sheet, and also the report recommended (#18) in the EIP. Mr. Egler noted that the graphs are similar to those in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) that the Borough does not use, but that percentages should be displayed. Ms. Macklin noted that in 2005, Council was presented with cash balances in all accounts.

## **3. Engagement letter – Maher Duessel.**

Mr. Egler noted that Maher Duessel is not increasing its fees for completion of the 2014, 2015, and 2016 audits; the cost will remain at the 2013 rate of \$26,867/year. Vice-President Moore asked about the decision to not include a CAFR. Mr. Egler responded that this is an optional service at a cost of \$3,500 and that he could provide additional statistical reporting in lieu of the CAFR.

**A motion was made to approve acceptance of the engagement letter from Maher Duessel to provide auditing services to the Borough for 2014, 2015, and 2016, period to include updated GASB statements, including, but not limited to, GASB 68.**

**Moved:** Ms. Macklin

**Second:** Ms. Moore

**All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

## **4. Permit fees – Building, planning and zoning.**

Mr. Friedson presented a comparison of permit fees for both surrounding and similarly-situated municipalities; he noted that many of the fees charged by Wilkinsburg are relatively low when compared against other communities. He further noted that the Borough's application is "over-exhaustive" but that there is no real best practice for fees. Mr. Friedson recommends a fee structure whereby applicants pay either \$40 (residential occupancy, dumpster, fence permits); \$60 (electrical, mechanical, roots, residential sign permits, temporary commercial sign permits, garage demolitions); or \$100 (grading permits, property inspections). Other fees he recommends are \$500 for conditional uses and special exceptions and \$1,000+ for hearings before the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Shattuck suggested that that latter should be a flat fee plus actual expenses, and President McCarthy-Johnson agreed, suggesting that the fees be lower but that actual costs be added. Mr. Lefebvre noted that the Borough has incurred costs of nearly \$7,000 this year in expenses related to Zoning Hearing Board hearings. Mr. Taiani suggested that the Borough charge a fee, plus costs, with a cap on the costs.

Mr. Friedson also presented ordinances from two other municipalities requiring mortgage companies to register abandoned property they've acquired; Ms. Marcinko recommended referring the information to the Borough Solicitor for review and an opinion.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Linda Atkins – 2021 Kendon Drive West.** – Asked if the street sweeping machine was new when it was purchased in 2007 with the answer being yes. She noted that people were barbequing on Penn Avenue between buildings and wondered if this is a permitted activity. Ms. Atkins also noted that the topic of grant funding was raised several meetings ago, and inquired about the Borough's process for identifying grants. Ms. Marcinko responded that the Borough does not have the capacity in-house to identify and write grant proposals; President McCarthy-Johnson noted that the Police Department completes their own grant proposals. Ms. Macklin noted that the engineer handles grant proposals related to infrastructure, and Vice-President Moore noted that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board has looked at a few grant possibilities.

President McCarthy-Johnson announced an Executive Session to be held following the public meeting.

Council was advised that they should not be directing Department heads to complete tasks, and that problems or issues should be directed to the Borough Manager for her to delegate.

Council recessed into an Executive Session at approximately 7:45 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business, President McCarthy-Johnson adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

---

Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson  
President Council